

(b) whether the Central Government has sought opinion from State Governments in this regard;

(c) if so, the views of State Governments, State-wise; and

(d) by when the Central Government intends to take a final decision in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI C.P. JOSHI): (a) to (d) Driving licences are issued by licensing authorities of State Governments/Union Territory Administrations. This Ministry has been sensitizing all States/UTs from time to time to follow the guidelines prescribed in the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 and Central Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989 while issuing driving licences. Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill, 2012, as passed by Rajya Sabha, and presently pending in Lok Sabha, seeks to amend certain provisions of Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 so as to provide safeguards for issue of driving licences and also prescribe/enhance penalties for various offences.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Cancellation of AI flights to Toronto

466. SHRIMATI VASANTHI STANLEY: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Air India (AI) has stopped two of its flights to Toronto despite large concentration of the Indian diaspora in Canada;

(b) whether it is also a fact that Jet Airways is the only Indian carrier flying between Toronto and Delhi which is charging high fare from passengers; and

(c) the immediate steps Government is taking to start Air India flight between Delhi and Toronto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI K.C. VENUGOPAL): (a) No, Sir. Air India was operating only one daily direct flight between India and Toronto, which was constrained to withdraw effective 12.05.2012 due to agitation by a section of its pilots.

(b) Yes, Sir. Jet Airways currently operates on Delhi-Brussels-Toronto and VV route on daily basis. However, foreign carriers also provide connectivity between India and Toronto *via* different cities.

(c) Air India was incurring losses on its operations to Toronto and incurred a cash deficit of about Rs.164 crore for the FY 2011-12 and Rs.20 crores for the period April- May 2012. Air India is carrying out a fresh assessment with regard to resumption of its operations to Toronto.

Hub and spoke allowance to AI pilots

467. SHRI MOHAMMED ADEEB: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the pilots of Air India (AI) are being paid hub and spoke allowance;

(b) whether it is a fact that, after merger of Air India and Indian Airlines, such allowance is no longer valid;

(c) whether it is a fact that hefty amount is being paid to the pilots of Air India in the form of various allowances are drain on the scarce resources of Air India;

(d) whether it is also having a bearing on the economy and viability of Air India; and

(e) if so, the steps being taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI K.C. VENUGOPAL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (e) Employees of erstwhile Air India and Indian Airlines are being paid wages and allowances in terms of agreements between the management and respective unions/associations. In order to look into the harmonization of wage, salary, work practices, etc. of all categories of employees of erstwhile Air India and Indian Airlines, Government had constituted a Committee of external experts under the Chairmanship of Justice(Retd) D.M. Dharmadhikari. The Committee's report has been accepted by the Government and sent to Air India for implementation. The pay and allowances recommended by the Committee are in accordance with the DPE Guidelines. However, in order to pay salary and allowances as per industry standards and over and above the DPE Guidelines, dispensation of the Government is being sought. On implementation of the Committee's Report, the wage bill of Air India would come down by approximately Rs.200/- crore.